1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

other castes, especially the Brahmins, the Komtis, the toddy-tappers and the shepherds, as well as the Muslims. This category also includes two Malas and a Madiga—all three belonging to untouchable castes. The land in the fourth group belongs to several different castes. However, many of these families possess only small fragments of dry land which are quite inadequate for their needs and can in no sense be described as 'economic holdings'.

The above figures have been taken from government records. While the possession of land sold to persons outside the kin-group is given after the completion of the necessary legal formalities, the division of shares from the family land does not necessitate this and in consequence we find that the land shown in the name of one person in the official records may actually be in the possession of several families. This may be illustrated by two examples. E. D. R. has four acres of dry land and six acres of wet land recorded in his name in government registers. The dry land and three acres of wet land are under his exclusive possession. This land is cultivated by him; and the entire harvest belongs to him. But the other three acres of wet land are divided into four pieces. One of these fragments is cultivated by E. D. R. himself, one by his cousin S. R. who is E. D. R.'s father's elder brother's son. The other two fragments are cultivated by E. R. and N. R. whose position is a little unusual. In the life-time of E. D. R.'s grandfather they 'came to his house' for suitor service. After serving the family for a stipulated number of years they were married to the daughters of the family, but continued to live there to assist the old man in his cultivation. After the death of E. D. R.'s grandfather they established separate houses of their own, and are now in exclusive possession of these fragments of land which belonged to E. D. R.'s family. From the above it is clear that although the land records show the land as being in the possession of E. D. R. alone, it is in fact possessed by four different families. The Madiga untouchables were given two acres of land as a reward for the services which they render to residents of the village and touring government officials. Official records show this land as being in the possession of one family: in point of fact, it is shared by as many as seven families.

Seceding members of a family get a share of the family's ancestral land. Fragmentation follows this division of ancestral

RITUAL STRUCTURE

For three to ten days the household gods, as well as those at the family's favourite shrine, are worshipped. For the latter the girl is taken out with the village women in a procession, and the Madigas are summoned to play their musical instruments. With the exception of the Brahmin and the Komti, in all other castes the women from the neighbourhood assemble every afternoon for singing and dancing at the house of the girl for whom the ceremony is being performed. Among the Muslims, at the time of first menstruation the girl is secluded for seven to eleven days. At the end of this period she is given new clothes, which she wears after taking her bath. 881

Ear and nose boring of the girls is done before the age of puberty among both the Hindus and the Muslims. But this act has no religious rites attached to it. 852

Marriage. In the community people are as a rule married when they are adults; only in some cases are adolescents married. Child-marriage is rare. Out of 380 first marriages investigated by us, only 14 could be described as child-marriages. 582

Among the Hindus, negotiated marriages are common. People show an unmistakable preference for cross-cousin marriage when the subject is discussed with them; but out of the 340 Hindu marriages analysed by us, only 18% were cross-cousin marriages, the rest being negotiated marriages into unrelated families. Muslims permit both parallel and cross-cousin marriages, and indeed regard them as highly desirable. Our sample of Muslim marriages is not quite adequate, but out of 40 marriages fully investigated 19 were between cousins. Among the agriculturists, and to a lesser extent among others, it is necessary for the girl's parents to pay a dowry to the boy. This accounts for the relatively few marriages by service. When the parents of the boy are too poor even to arrange for the normal expenses of an average wedding—involving expenditure on the buying of clothes and ornaments for the bride and bridegroom, marriage feasts and other incidental expenses—the boy may serve with his prospective father-in-law for a stipulated period, at the end of which the latter marries him to his daughter at his own expense. Marriages by exchange may be arranged between two families to economize on the dowry; and further they may be celebrated at the same time so as to complete two weddings for the expense of one. Cases of run-away marriages occur at times, but they are 583

1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17
Hindus

583 regarded as breaches of the established rules of society and treated accordingly.

585 It is difficult to summarize the rites and observances involved in a Hindu marriage, for they differ greatly from caste to caste, and from family to family. Here only a very general outline can be given.

The wedding takes place in the bride's house, on an auspicious day fixed by the two parties on the advice of the Brahmin priest. The bridegroom's party, consisting of relations and friends, leave their village in good time to arrive in the bride's village at least a day before the actual date of the marriage. On arrival they are received with great ceremony by the bride's people, and are lodged in a house kept vacant and clean for their use. In the courtesies that are exchanged it is necessary to make some special effort to keep the bridegroom's mother and sisters pleased for any dissatisfaction to them is likely to lead to trouble which may hold up further rites. While the bridegroom's party try to settle down in their house, the bride's people finalize the arrangements for the first dinner. When everything is ready word is sent to the bridegroom's party. After the dinner nothing remains to be done on that day. The guests return to their temporary abode; the hosts get busy to make everything ready for the rites of the next day. [515] When the next day arrives the bride's mother and other female relations carry water and twigs to the groom's mother and other guests so that 'they may wash their mouths'. A little later breakfast [776] is sent to them. The first major rite for the day is the worship of the bride's *kula-devata* or family god. In this both the bride and the bridegroom participate. The second major rite is known as *lagnam*, which must be performed at an auspicious hour determined by the Brahmin on the basis of his astrological calculations. The bride's party go in a procession to bring the guests to the marriage shed. At the appointed hour the *lagnam* is performed by chanting religious verses. The bridegroom ties a necklace of black beads round the bride's neck. This necklace symbolizes her married status, and she should not be without it unless she is widowed. He also puts rings on the second toes of her feet. Before the tying of *mangalsutra* (black beads) the two have to promise to stand by each other through all phases of life, for the mutual satisfaction of bodily, economic and spiritual needs. But the marriage is not yet complete. To put the seal of religious authority on it, the important